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NEWSLETTER

102-1359

23 April 1992

Washington, DC

EASTER SUNDAY - Easter is a holiday of tradition -- of families gathered together around the dinner table, of children dressed up in their best outfits for church services, and of reflection -- counting the many blessings which have been bestowed upon us by the events of 2000 years ago.

In the nation's capital, many celebrate the holiday by attending the Easter Egg Roll at the White House. This event actually dates back to 1879 when it moved from the Capitol grounds to the White House lawn at the invitation of President Rutherford B Hayes. At that first White House lawn event, the egg-rolling was enlivened by the appearance of a "ragged and poor" boy of 14 -- too old for egg-rolling but young and quick enough to snatch a basket of Easter eggs. He then fled through the gates and down the street with the children in pursuit. Captured by the police, the boy returned the eggs, much to the delight of the children. Every year, I sign two wooden eggs supplied by the White House to be given away at this popular children's event which has become an annual tradition.

Another favorite pastime in South Texas involves what we refer to in Spanish as "cascarones." Similar to April Fool's jokes, cascarones are designed for the amusement of children but can also be enjoyed by adults as well. The cascaron is an eggshell filled with confetti that is destined to be cracked open on the head of an unsuspecting victim.

Regardless of how you spend it -- cracking cascarones in Texas, rolling eggs on the White House lawn or sitting around the dinner table with loved ones -- Easter is a holiday enjoyed by all.

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A BREATH OF FRESH AIR - April is definitely a month for environmental awareness. As mentioned in last week's newsletter, it was with pride that I cosponsored resolutions designating April 15th as National Recycling Day and April 22nd as Earth Day. Recognizing the critical significance of trees to our world's environment, I am proudly cosponsoring H J Res 403 establishing the last Friday in April as NATIONAL ARBOR DAY 1992.

(more)

It was more than 100 years ago that the State of Nebraska instituted the first official Arbor Day observance in America. Today, nearly every state observes an Arbor Day that is celebrated by schools, service clubs, and civic groups, as well as Aboricultural, Horticultural, and Agricultural groups.

The importance of trees to our environment has never been questioned. In ancient times, trees were worshiped as deities, and in some civilizations, a festival celebrating trees was observed. Trees provide us with a variety of important things, from the oxygen we breathe to the paper on which this newsletter is printed.

We often take trees for granted overlooking the environmental attributes they possess -- that is until we come across a desert or a barren city block. From an aesthetic point of view, we are thankful for their ability to change or add to the character of an area -- be it the palms of the Rio Grande Valley, the fall foliage of the Northeast, the Cherry Blossoms of the nation's capital, or the newly planted Texas pecan on the Capitol Hill grounds. Trees truly are a breath of fresh air!

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CREDIT YOUNG FARMERS - With an aging farm population and a dramatic decline in the number of young people entering farming, I have introduced legislation to provide a tax incentive for beginning farmers.

Today, the capital investment required to begin a viable farming operation is quite high. More and more these financial obstacles are putting farming out of the reach of many young people and there's a growing concern out in rural America over whether the next generation can afford to farm the land.

A study released last year by the U S Department of Agriculture found that the entry of full-time farmers less than 25 years old, fell by 50-percent between the 1978-82 and 1982-87 periods; entry of farmers 25-34 years old, the most common age of entry, fell by 30-percent.

H R 4452 will provide beginning farmers with an income tax credit for the purchase of farmland and farming equipment. A beginning farmer would be eligible for a tax credit of 10-percent of the cost of purchasing farmland up to \$35,000 and depreciable farming equipment with a cap of \$15,000 per individual. It is my belief that this assistance would help spur economic growth in the agricultural sector similar to what is envisioned with the proposed tax credit for first-time home buyers.

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT - We've all heard the tragic stories of abused and neglected children -- it's something no one can ignore. What we need to hear more about are the success stories of private sector organizations teaming up with state and local governments, educators, health and social service professionals and religious leaders to address the problems at the local level.

April is Child Abuse and Neglect Month and it's important that the public be informed of not only the alarming increase in the incidence and severity of child abuse, but also of the responsibility each of us has to foster where children are safe, nurtured and respected.

The Department of Health and Human Services wants to help you show you care with their "SHOW YOU CARE" Community Awareness Kit. The kit is intended to spark your imagination and encourage discussions and actions within your organization to take a stand against child maltreatment.

For more information on these kits and other materials, you may contact the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect at 1-800-394-3366.

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